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Senior Subcommittee Member

Jacksonville Congressman Hits 'Ramparts' CIA Story

CPYRGHT

By DALE PULLEN
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WASHINGTON—Jacksonville Congressman Charles Bennett, a conservative Democrat perhaps is best known nationally for (1) his more than 15-year record of never having missed a roll call vote in the House, and (2) his recent push to get the House to police itself with an Ethics Committee.

Not so well known is the fact that he has been a member of the House Armed Services subcommittee on the CIA longer than any other member (10 years).

It gives Bennett a long haul view of the Central Intelligence Agency not available to many.

The recent furor stirred by a story in "Ramparts" magazine that the CIA had been secretly pumping taxpayer dollars into front organizations who then passed the money on to individuals or groups also has stirred Bennett.

He is very upset about the fact that the beans were spilled from the CIA can because, in his opinion, it has been very damaging to the U.S.

And, to show what he thinks of "Ramparts" magazine, the gazette that opened the can with a story, he has introduced a report by Negro columnist Carl T. Rowan in the "Congressional Record."

Bennett last week said, of the CIA can-opening:

"Our country received a serious blow.

"And there is no serious alternative to getting money to some of these groups now."

Many of the groups receiving the funds engaged in international meetings and carried the publicity and propaganda footballs for the United States position on a variety of subjects.

The groups often needed the funds, U.S. officials believed, to

counter propaganda efforts by Communist groups in various international organizations.

That's bad enough, according to Bennett — the loss of a means to get funds to some of these groups — but he also is upset because "just talking about spying is not helpful to our country."

He indicated this was so because effective spy work does not operate very well in a fish bowl.

The Rowan column that Bennett pushed into the "Congressional Record" is significant.

Congressmen often put articles into the Record that express their views — views they don't necessarily want to take publicly or "on the record."

Rowan said an editor of "Ramparts" had been in Prague, by his own admission, to meet with officers of the International Union of Students for two days.

Rowan quoted the editor, Robert Scheer, as saying of the IUS that "it is essentially an organ of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union."

The columnist wound up with

this paragraph concerning Ramparts:

"Everybody is being asked to come clean these days and tell where he gets his money. Before the suspicion fades, 'Ramparts' may find it desirable to reveal in detail who has provided the estimated million and a half dollars the magazine will have lost by the end of this year. And Scheer may have more to say about his mission to Prague."

Said Bennett of Rowan after referring to the last paragraph:

"He's not the kind of guy you would say unusually favors the conservative position," which was Bennett's way of saying he thinks Rowan is a liberal.

Actually, and Bennett knows this, what is extremely significant about Rowan's final paragraph is Rowan's background graph is Rowan's background as a U.S. government official who, before he took to his syndicated column, surely must have known plenty about CIA funding and work in the international arena.

Rowan, in 1964 was named by President Kennedy to replace Edward R. Murrow as director of the United States Information Agency.

What did the USIA do?

President Kennedy, in 1963, said its mission was to "help achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives by influencing public attitudes in other nations."

Carl Rowan obviously knows a good deal more on the subject than he is able to write about. It gives added weight to what he does write.